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SPAWN

230

DIGITAL
EDITION



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Celebrity Savior Part 2

PREVIOUSLY IN SPAWN

A trio of supernatural enthusiasts looks deeper into the realities of a new Hellspawn walking the Earth, focusing their attention on Jim Downing with no real understanding of just how close they are to the truth. Meanwhile, Jim and Mark are shown the full scale of the work they have ahead of them with Jim's new charitable foundation, as Ramus and his associates lay out the shocking scope of the interest shown in Jim's ability to heal those in need.

Seen as a savior by some, and an abomination by others, Jim's struggle to control the darkness within him has never been more important. The world is watching, and waiting for any excuse to crucify him at the unforgiving altar of mass media.

Unfortunately for Jim, there are still many factions with the desire to bend him to their own needs – both good and evil – and the horrors and complications of his new life are only just beginning.



Jim Downing (Spawn) – A man whose past is shrouded in mystery, and connected intimately to the very fabric of the *Spawn* mythos, Jim is the world's newest Hellspawn... and so much more. Having spent years in a deep coma, Jim's main drive is piecing together the fragments of the man he was, in an effort to discover the man he truly is.



Marc Rosen – A would-be reporter-turned-media manager and confidant of Jim Downing, Marc views Jim as his ticket to a better life – though the price for that success may be far greater than Marc knows.



Sara Johnston – When Jim woke from his coma (issue #185), Sara was the first person to greet him on the other side of the darkness. A woman of strong faith, Sara's connection to Jim will test her in ways she could never imagine.



Susan Mathews – Susan is Marc Rosen's girlfriend and a woman with strong abandonment issues. Feeling neglected by Marc, Susan seduced Jim, only to be rejected, as Jim felt uncomfortable with the situation. Longing for attention, Susan has consistently had her advances ignored, as Marc's attention has been focused on his new career.



Father Hallwell – A representative dispatched from the Vatican to meet with Jim, in an effort to gauge the true nature of his "gifts". Using Sara's faith as leverage, Hallwell is hoping to further the Church's agenda – an agenda that may be more nefarious than anyone knows.



Hillspwn, AngelsROK, Redeemer69 – Three strangers who met and bonded in a series of Internet chat rooms due their interest in the darker side of the afterlife. In particular, the mysteries and curse of the legendary Hellspawn fuel their discussions.

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THERE HAVE BEEN AT LEAST TWO DOZEN PEOPLE KILLED AND HUNDREDS MORE INJURED IN RENEWED VIOLENCE DEEP WITHIN THE CITY LIMITS OF EGYPT'S LARGEST CITY, CAIRO. WITH A STAGGERING POPULATION OF OVER 44 MILLION, POLICE THERE HAVE BEEN BATTLING CONTINUING CIVIL UNREST AND ORGANIZED RIOTING EVER SINCE THE COUNTRY'S LEADER SEIZED MOST OF THE DOWNTOWN AREA WITH HIS MILITARY TROOPS.

REPORTS HAVE SURFACED THAT THE ARREST OF SEVENTEEN PEOPLE IN CONNECTION WITH A DEADLY RIOT AT A SOCCER MATCH LAST YEAR-- HELPED SPUR THE INITIAL UPRISING. THE SEVENTEEN DEFENDANTS HAVE ALL BEEN SENTENCED TO DEATH FOR THEIR PARTICIPATION AT THE STADIUM WHERE 63 PEOPLE WERE TRAMPLED TO DEATH AND HUNDREDS OF OTHERS SUSTAINED INJURIES.



WHAT HAS SOME WORLD LEADERS CONCERNED... IS THE CONTINUATION OF WHAT'S HAPPENING IN OTHER PARTS OF THAT REGION. THE BORDERING COUNTRIES OF LIBYA AND SUDAN HAVE BOTH BEEN IN THE NEWS OF LATE BECAUSE OF THEIR OWN INTERNAL PROBLEMS DEALING WITH THEIR CITIZENS.

THE STRANGE JUXTAPOSITION OF WHAT'S HAPPENING THERE PLAYS SQUARELY IN THE FACE OF WHAT IS GRIPPING AMERICA'S ATTENTION. NAMELY THE RECENT APPEARANCE OF THE MYSTERIOUS MAN KNOWN BY THE NAME OF *JIM DOWNING*. WE'VE BECOME SO TRANSFIXED WITH HIS STORY-- OR LACK THEREOF, SINCE HE CAN'T RECALL ANY OF HIS PAST-- THAT WE SEEM SOMEWHAT BLINDED TO THE ATROCITIES CURRENTLY GOING ON AROUND THE WORLD.



I GET IT! WE ALL WANT TO THINK WE'LL ***LIVE FOREVER!*** AND THOUGH INTELLECTUALLY WE UNDERSTAND IT TO BE IMPOSSIBLE... ALONG COMES ***JIM DOWNING!*** ADORED BY US LOWLY HUMANS SO WILLING TO GIVE HIM THE MANTLE OF ***DIVINITY.*** LIKE LEMMINGS, WE PUT OUR FAITH IN STRANGERS... ***BUT*** WHAT OTHER OPTIONS ARE THERE?!

FOR SUCKERS LIKE US... ***NOT MANY!***

WE HAVE TO RELY ON POLITICIANS AND THEIR CRONIES TO ASSEMBLE REASONABLE SOLUTIONS TO SOME OF THESE WIDESPREAD CULTURAL WARS. AND THOUGH WE'D ALL LIKE TO THINK A SCHMUCK LIKE DOWNING WOULD DO A BETTER JOB OF HANDLING SOME OF THE CRAP RUINING OUR WORLD, IT'S CONGRESS AND THE WHITE HOUSE THAT HAVE TO PROTECT US. ***GOD HELP US ALL!!***



"YOU CAN ALREADY SEE THE EFFECTS OF THESE GLOBAL POLICIES FAILING MISERABLY! ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS TURN ON YOUR TELEVISION AND IT BECOMES ABUNDANTLY CLEAR OUR CURRENT GOVERNMENT IS CLUELESS IN ITS ATTEMPT TO STEM THE TIDE OF A CERTAIN COUNTRY'S HANDLING OF THEIR OWN CITIZENS."



"SYRIA AND LIBYA ARE BUT TWO EXAMPLES OF WHERE WE ARE EITHER LACKING LEADERSHIP OR SIMPLY BACKING THE WRONG SIDE IN THESE BLOODY CONFLICTS."



EVERYTHING'S IN UTTER CHAOS!
AND THERE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE A SINGLE PERSON WILLING TO TAKE A BRAVE STANCE AGAINST THE EVIL IN THIS WORLD!

"AND!... **DON'T EVEN** GET ME STARTED ON THE OBAMA ADMINISTRATION'S STANCE WITH THE NEVER ENDING **SLAUGHTER** BETWEEN ISRAELI AND PALESTINIAN FORCES!"

1:27 A.M.



HLLSPWN: Got a bunch of nasty texts after my last posts. Didn't know I was so LOVED! You don't want 2 read my posts... then **DON'T!!!!** Tell your brain 2 move your feet and **WALK AWAY**. Or close your eyes. Or shoot yourself. U don't have to read this!!!

Hllspwn: But those that have 1/2 a brain... they already believe me. Jim Downing is a HELLSPAWN. I know the world thinks he's some kind of god or something but the proof is so obvious.

AngelsROK: do you ever sleep?!! Might do you some good.

Hllspwn: didn't I tell you... I'm a vampire. Just like in those stupid TWILIGHT flicks you love.

AngelsROK: You don't believe in vampires but U blog about demons? Nice consistency.



Hllspwn: Ain't no vampires in the bible. You should read it some time. Might learn something.

AngelsROK: Like you've read the whole thing

Redeemer69: OH NO!!!! you 2 aren't at it again?

AngelsROK: Morning Redeemer... ☺

Hllspwn: Hey, 'deemer... got some of that info you asked about



Hllspwn: The bible does talk about other resurrections but Satan controls them NOT God. That's why we have evil in us... becuz Adam couldn't see Eve was a temptress. That is why he bit the apple

AngelsROK: Temptress.... wooooooooooooooooo fancy word. Just say it. You think Eve was a bitch. A typical male thing to say.

Hllspwn: I'm not bashing Eve. She was duped 2. I keep saying we can't see the evil becuz it hides itself. That's what Downing is doing. Except he's HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT!! U just choose not to believe that. You're the kind that always bites the apple!!!

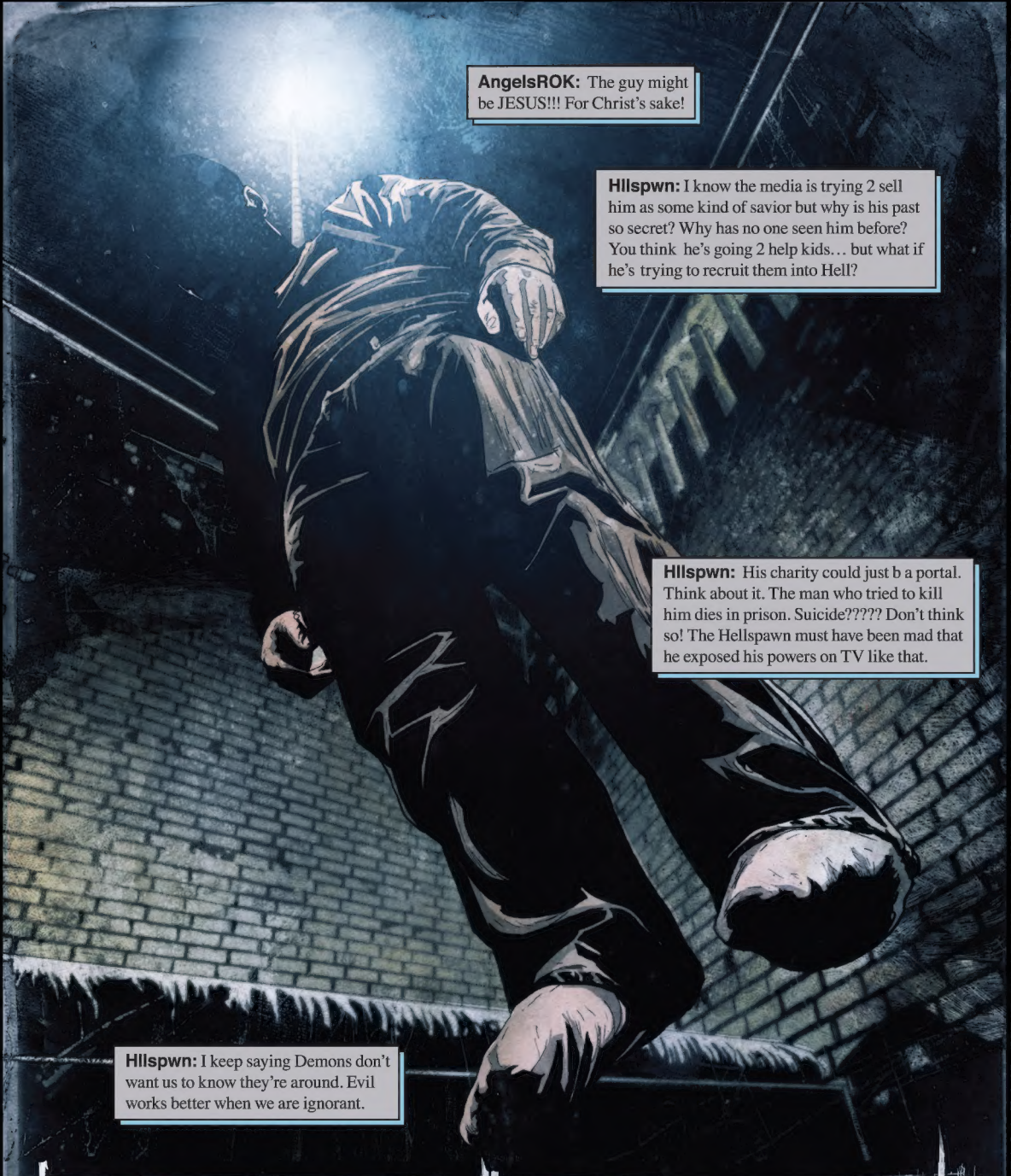


AngelsROK: Actually I own a PC

Redeemer69: LOL

AngelsROK: Here's my problem. This downing guy besides being a stud to look at has done AWESOME stuff. We've all seen it. He's helped fix others AND walked away after getting shot. The entire world is talking about the dude. Why bring a negative vibe? I think U r just jealous.



A large, dark, and dramatic illustration of a man, Hellspawn, falling from a rooftop. He is wearing a dark, long-sleeved shirt and pants. His body is angled downwards, and his arms are outstretched. The background shows a brick wall and a dark, industrial-looking structure.

AngelsROK: The guy might be JESUS!!! For Christ's sake!

Hillspwn: I know the media is trying 2 sell him as some kind of savior but why is his past so secret? Why has no one seen him before? You think he's going 2 help kids... but what if he's trying to recruit them into Hell?

Hillspwn: His charity could just b a portal. Think about it. The man who tried to kill him dies in prison. Suicide????? Don't think so! The Hellspawn must have been mad that he exposed his powers on TV like that.

Hillspwn: I keep saying Demons don't want us to know they're around. Evil works better when we are ignorant.

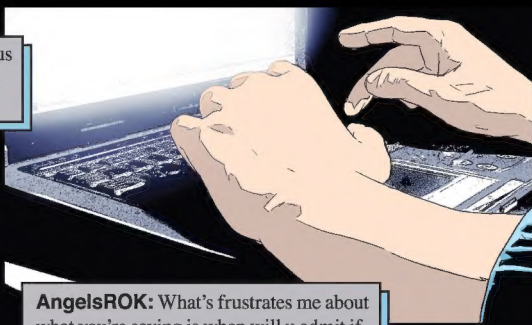


Hillspwn: So I don't care how many miracles he performs. It's still the work of the devil... not HEAVEN!!!!





Hllspwn: but GOD help us
all if I'm right and Heaven
isn't able to stop him.



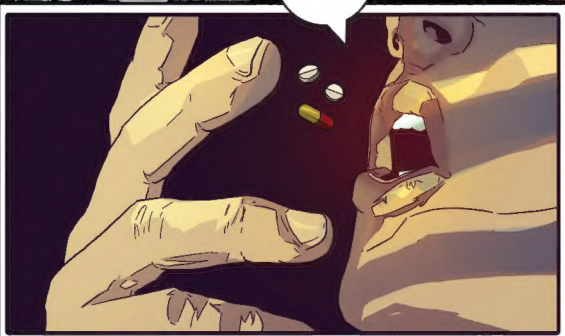
AngelsROK: What's frustrates me about
what you're saying is when will u admit if
you're wrong?? Bcuz if the good guys do
good deeds AND the bad guys do good
works... How can we ever tell them apart?

Hllspwn: I can. That's
why I write about this shit.

Hllspwn: Especially if u
saw the sketch I did over a
screen grab of Downing.

koff

koff



AngelsROK: Well I
guess the rest of us can't
B as PERFECT as u r.



THANKS FOR COMING OVER EARLY, SARA. I WAS NEEDING... TO SEE A FRIENDLY FACE.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO THANK ME. I'VE BEEN WANTING TO COME TALK TO YOU SOONER, BUT YOU'VE BEEN KEEPING YOURSELF BUSY, I'M SURE.

I GUESS.

SO WHAT'S IT LIKE? DEALING WITH ALL THE MEDIA AND THE CROWDS? IT WAS HARD ENOUGH FOR ME TO JUST GET INSIDE THE BUILDING. CROWD GOT A LITTLE CRAZY DOWN THERE. THEY STILL THINK I'M... YOUR GIRLFRIEND OR SOMETHING.

THAT'S KIND OF FUNNY... RIGHT?



I'M SORRY ABOUT ALL THAT. THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO. THERE'S ALWAYS A DOZEN OF THEM OUT FRONT ALL THE TIME. LUCKILY THERE'S THE BACK WAY I CAN TAKE OUT. YOU SHOULD HAVE COME THAT WAY.



NO. I TOLD YOU ON THE PHONE I DON'T WANT TO COME ACROSS LIKE I'M TRYING TO HIDE SOMETHING. IT'LL JUST MAKE THEM WRITE EVEN MORE GARBAGE. BUT SERIOUSLY...

HOW'RE YOU COPING WITH EVERYTHING?

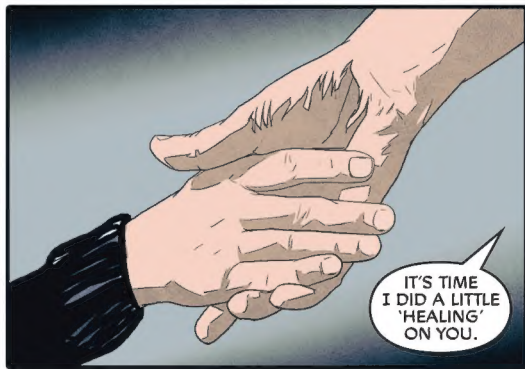
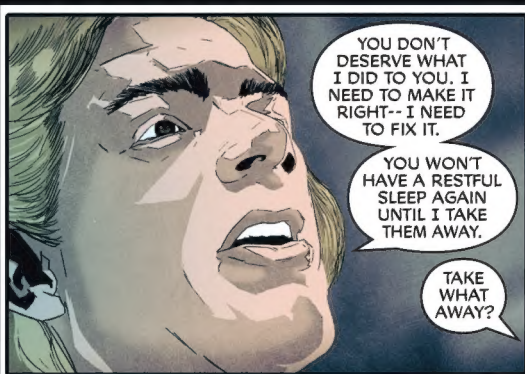


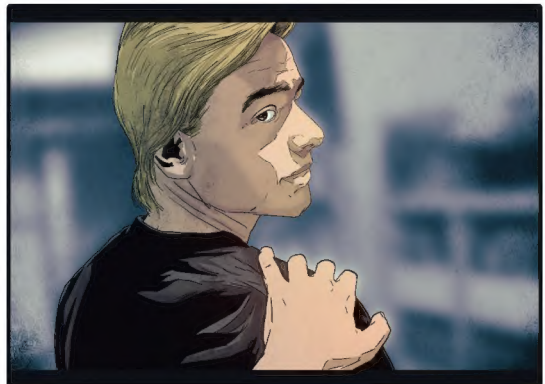
NOT BAD. SOME OF IT IS ACTUALLY GOOD. IT'S HELPING DRAW ATTENTION TO THE FOUNDATION-- WHICH IS WHAT WE WANT. I'M HAPPY TO TALK ABOUT THAT, BUT BEFORE YOUR GUESTS GET HERE, I WANTED TO SAY SOMETHING TO YOU.

THAT NIGHT-- WHEN I TOOK YOU INTO THE ALLEYS. WHEN I TOOK YOU... INTO THE SHADOWS. I DIDN'T MEAN TO SCARE YOU LIKE THAT. AND I SHOULDN'T HAVE DONE IT IN THE FIRST PLACE.*

YOU WERE TRYING TO HELP.

IT DOESN'T MATTER! I SAW IT IN YOUR EYES THAT DAY-- HOW MUCH I FREAKED YOU OUT-- AND I KNOW THAT'S WHY YOU LEFT TOWN BECAUSE I SCARED YOU. I KICK MYSELF FOR THAT.









DON'T ANSWER IT.

WE HAVE TO. I KNOW.



HELLO?

THANKS. SEND THEM UP WHEN YOU'RE DONE.



THAT WAS SECURITY DOWNSTAIRS. OUR GUESTS ARE HERE. THEY'RE JUST GETTING THEIR PICTURES TAKEN AND SHOWING THEIR I.D. THEY'LL BE UP IN A MINUTE.

I REALLY APPRECIATE YOU DOING THIS FOR ME. IT MEANS A LOT.

Moments later...



GOOD EVENING, MR. DOWNING. I AM FATHER HALLWELL, AND IT'S AN EXTREME PLEASURE TO MEET YOU IN PERSON. WE'RE **VERY GRATEFUL** YOU'RE WILLING TO TAKE TIME FROM YOUR BUSY SCHEDULE AND MEET WITH US LIKE THIS. SARA HAS SPOKEN VERY HIGHLY OF YOU AND YOUR ACTIONS-- THOUGH IN TRUTH, WE'VE BEEN FOLLOWING YOU **QUITE CLOSELY** SINCE YOUR SUDDEN EMERGENCE INTO THE SPOTLIGHT.

AND FROM WHAT WE'VE SEEN ALREADY-- YOUR POWERS-- THEY REALLY ARE QUITE MIRACULOUS. THOUGH WITH ALL THE ATTENTION YOU'VE BEEN GARNERING, I'M SURE I'M NOT THE ONLY ONE THAT'S SAID THAT.

BUT UNLIKE THE MEDIA OUTLETS WHO ONLY WANT YOUR TIME, SO AS TO BOOST RATINGS-- WE TAKE WHAT WE DO VERY SERIOUSLY.

AND WHAT IS IT YOU'RE TRYING TO DO, FATHER?

WE'RE WANTING TO SEE-- GIVEN THE INTERNATIONAL INTEREST YOU'VE DRAWN-- IF YOU'D BE INCLINED TO ALIGN YOURSELF WITH THE CATHOLIC CHURCH. IT IS THE POPE'S DESIRE TO SHOW THE WORLD THAT A MAN LIKE YOURSELF... WHO'S OBVIOUSLY BEEN GRACED BY 'GOD'S TOUCH'... IS A PART OF GOD'S PLAN AS FORETOLD IN THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

HE IS CONVINCED THAT IF YOU WERE TO JOIN HIM AND EMBRACE CATHOLICISM, NOT ONLY WOULD IT BRING GREAT COMFORT TO HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF HIS FAITHFUL... BUT YOU COULD POSSIBLY BE THE ONE CATALYST TO UNITE **ALL OF MANKIND** INTO BELIEF IN A SINGULAR RELIGION.

THERE ARE SO MANY WHO HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR PROOF OF THE ALMIGHTY'S PRESENCE. YOU COULD PROVIDE THAT UNIFYING VALIDATION.

WOW!... THAT'S... UM... I-- I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY.

I UNDERSTAND. AND IF I WERE IN YOUR SHOES-- I'M SURE I'D FEEL THE SAME WAY.

MY TASK IS NOT TO PRESSURE YOU OR MS. JOHNSTON. IT'S MERELY TO TELL YOU THAT WE CAN HELP YOU, IN WHATEVER WAY YOU'D WANT, TOWARDS ACCOMPLISHING YOUR GOALS. AS YOU MIGHT IMAGINE, OUR OUTREACH HAS BEEN ENTRENCHED IN MANY COUNTRIES FOR CENTURIES. WE CAN TAKE YOUR MESSAGE TO SO MANY WITH THE INFRASTRUCTURE WE ALREADY HAVE IN PLACE.

BUT THE ONE OVERRIDING POSSIBILITY IS THAT FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER... WE COULD HAVE **GLOBAL HARMONY** ON ALL RELIGIOUS FRONTS. CAN YOU IMAGINE WHAT THAT WOULD MEAN? NO MORE WARS BASED ON OUR INHERENT BELIEFS. NO MORE DIVISIONS AMONG THE POPULACE. THINK ABOUT THE MILLIONS OF CHILDREN WHO MIGHT NOT HAVE TO GROW UP AS VICTIMS OF RAVAGED BATTLEFIELDS.

I'M NOT SAYING IT'LL HAPPEN OVERNIGHT. BUT WITH **GOD'S MERCY** WE CAN BEGIN GOING DOWN A PEACEFUL PATH LIKE NOTHING WE'VE SEEN IN OUR LIFETIME.

WE KNOW. BUT WE'RE WILLING TO BE FLEXIBLE IN WAITING FOR YOU TO DECIDE ON SUCH AN ENORMOUS UNDERTAKING. ALL I REQUEST AT THIS TIME IS A SMALL BLOOD SAMPLE.

ALL THAT IS VERY FLATTERING BUT... I CAN'T REMEMBER IF I'M EVEN RELIGIOUS. OR EVER WENT TO CHURCH.



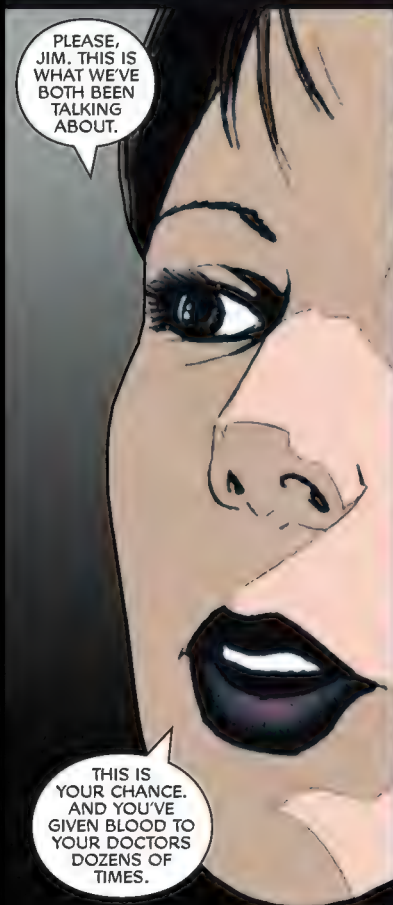
A BLOOD
SAMPLE...?

I'M...
NOT WILLING
TO DO
THAT.



IT'S MERELY
A HISTORIC TRADITION.
OUR CHURCH TAKES A
SAMPLE FROM ALL OF US
WHO MIGHT PRESIDE OVER
THOSE WHO BELIEVE IN
THE BIBLE.

IT'S A RATHER
SIMPLE WAY FOR
THE CHURCH TO
MAKE SURE WE ARE
ANOINTING GOOD
MEN, AND NOT
DEMONS.



PLEASE,
JIM. THIS IS
WHAT WE'VE
BOTH BEEN
TALKING
ABOUT.

THIS IS
YOUR CHANCE.
AND YOU'VE
GIVEN BLOOD TO
YOUR DOCTORS
DOZENS OF
TIMES.



I'M SORRY.
I CAN'T DO
IT.

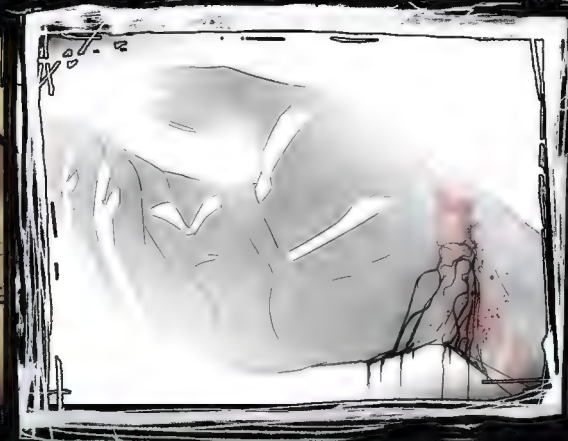
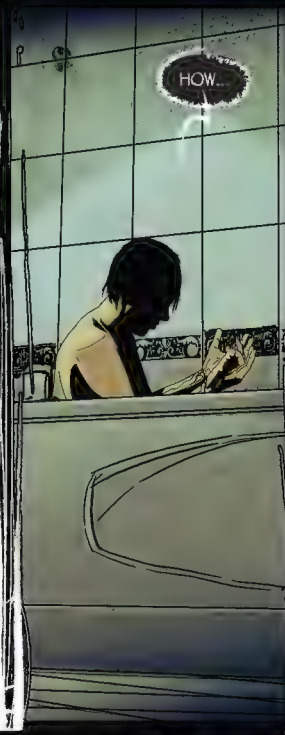


THAT'S
UNFORTUNATE
FOR ALL OF US,
MR. DOWNING.

* New York City morgue, 37 hours ago.







ABOUT
FIFTEEN
MINUTES.

SHORT
ENOUGH THAT
NO VITAL
ORGANS SHOULD
BE DAMAGED.
HOW'S SHE
FEEL?



GAIN
THEIR
TRUST.

ALL OF THEM.
DOWNING'S. YOUR
BOYFRIEND'S. SARA'S--
AND WHOEVER ELSE
YOU NEED TO.

YOU DO
THAT... AND WE
EVENTUALLY
WIN.

SO YOU
WANT TO
KNOW WHO
SHE WAS?
THAT'S EASY...
SHE'S ANOTHER
LOST SOUL
LIKE ALL THE
REST.

BUT
THEY CAN'T
EVER KNOW
THAT.

ISN'T
THAT RIGHT,
SUSAN?

THAT'S
RIGHT...
MASTER.



I KNOW YOU'RE SHORT STAFFED TONIGHT. BUT CALL THEM ALL BACK AND TELL THEM WE'LL BE ISSUING AN OFFICIAL STATEMENT SHORTLY.



I JUST FINISHED TYPING IT UP, BUT WANT TO LOOK IT OVER ONE LAST TIME BEFORE SENDING IT OFF. EVERY MEDIA OUTLET WILL GET JIM'S REACTION TO HIS ASSAILANT'S APPARENT SUICIDE. CHECK YOUR EMAIL EVERY FIVE MINUTES.

I'LL CALL YOU LATER.



TROUBLE IN PARADISE?

JUST TRYING TO WRAP UP THE LAST OF OUR MEDIA REQUESTS.

TAKE YOUR TIME. I CAN WAIT.

YOU SURE?



LOOK, MARC-- I KNOW I HAVEN'T BEEN THE EASIEST TO GET ALONG WITH LATELY. IN FACT I'VE BEEN QUITE A BITCH. BUT I KNOW HOW HARD YOU'VE BEEN WORKING TOWARDS AN OPPORTUNITY LIKE THIS AND WELL... I GUESS I JUST GOT A LITTLE JEALOUS.

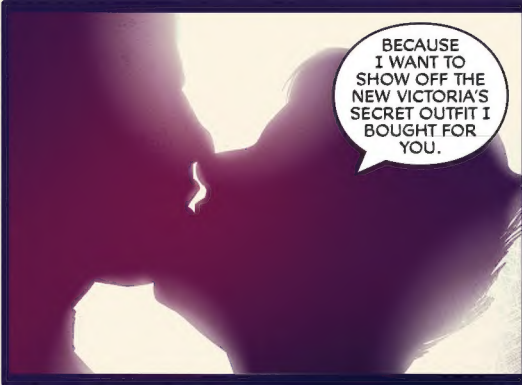
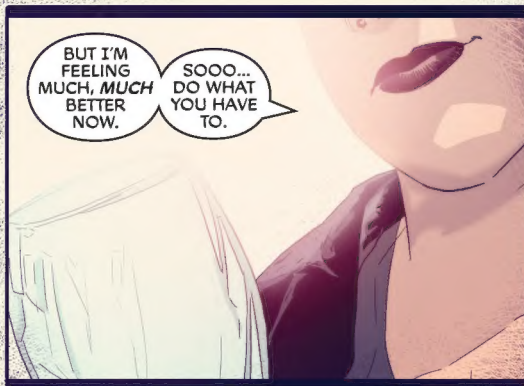
ALL THE TIME YOU'VE SPENT WITH JIM AND THE FOUNDATION AND ALL THE COORDINATING YOU'VE BEEN DOING. I WAS TAKING IT TOO PERSONAL.



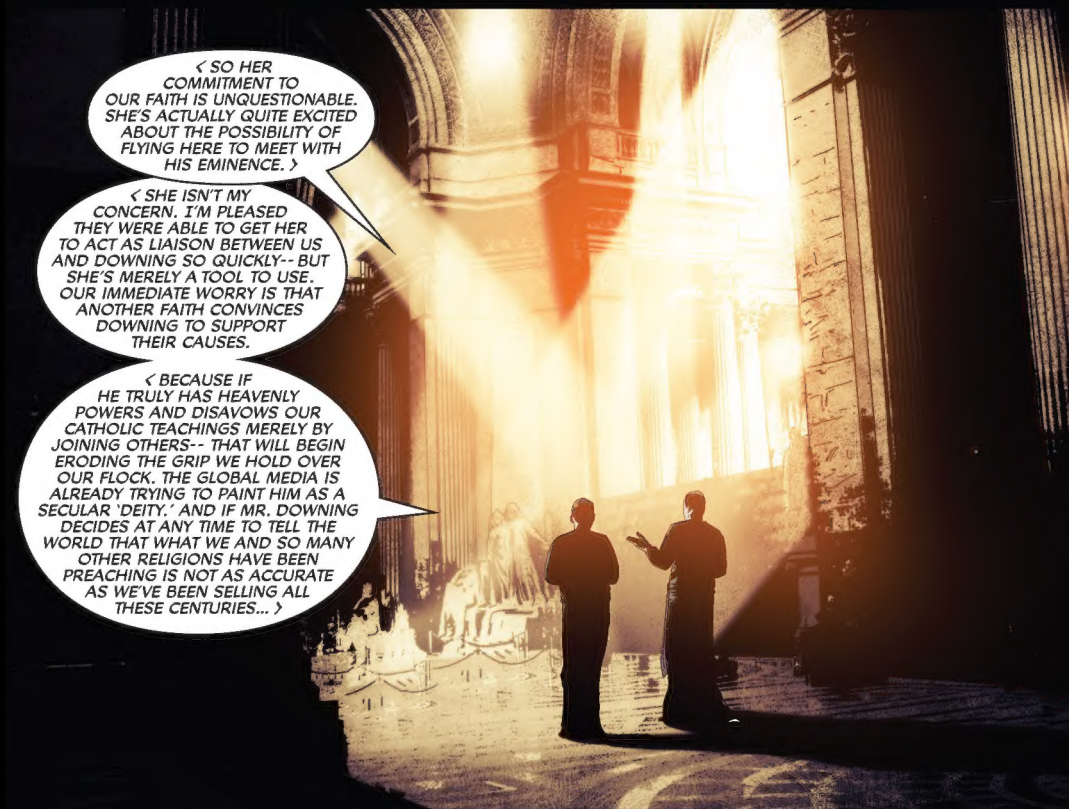
YOU HAD EVERY RIGHT TO BE PISSED OFF. I HAVEN'T BEEN FAIR TO YOU. AND I'M SORRY FOR YELLING-- YOU DIDN'T DESERVE THAT.



IT'S NOTHING A NICE LONG, HOT BATH COULDN'T CURE.



Vatican City.





<...WE HAVE
WAYS TO GET
AROUND HIS
RESISTANCE!>



TO BE CONTINUED



Tyrant
Lizard
King

EMPIRE